



## Academy for Discovery at Lakewood IB Middle Years Programme Assessment Policy

### **Philosophy: Why does assessment matter?**

The Academy for Discovery at Lakewood staff believes that meaningful learning occurs when teachers and students aim for purposeful and appropriately challenging learning goals. Assessment plays an important role in the achievement of those goals. Clearly defined objectives establish those goals while success criteria describe the evidence needed to justify that these goals were met. Assessments provide that evidence. Effective assessment informs instructional decisions, provides feedback to guide improvement efforts and prompts the self-reflection of students and teachers who use the information assessments generate. The decisions fostered by assessment can help to make next steps more likely to result in progress toward targeted goals. Strategically used assessment also supports the realization of Lakewood's mission.

#### ***Academy for Discovery at Lakewood Mission Statement***

*In partnership with students, families, and community, the Academy for Discovery at Lakewood will inspire in its students a lifelong passion for learning in a global society. With a commitment to academic excellence and personal integrity, students will demonstrate independent and reflective thinking, creativity, as well as a sense of social responsibility and intercultural understanding.*

A *lifelong passion for learning* and a *commitment to academic excellence* requires that students are knowledgeable and possess the skills for inquiry, creative thinking, critical thinking and self-reflection. This policy strives to help all Lakewood students in the development of those IB learner profile attributes. Assessments serve a valuable role in the development of every learner's ability to use feedback to progress when they also possess the disposition to do so. Lakewood's staff is committed to helping all students develop the skill and the will to become assessment-capable learners and thoughtful decision makers.

### **Purpose: Why are we rethinking assessment?**

Traditional report card grades can represent achievement attained, but frequently fail to drive learning or support progress for ALL students. This policy aims to establish a set of goals and practices enabling Lakewood students, teachers and parents to use the information assessments provide to improve learning and instruction while supporting the collaboration required to ensure that ALL students are prepared to meet future challenges with success. We recognize that as an MYP candidate school we have a unique opportunity to address the concerns we experience and those we hear from parents and students by utilizing the assessment practices required by IB in ways which would provide the greatest chance that every individual student experiences significant growth as a learner. This is a shared journey, one which will require adjustment and commitment from all stakeholders. Like all changes, this policy will require practice, feedback, and continual review to ensure its effective use is meeting student learning needs.

## **Assessment Principles: What are the characteristics of effective assessment?**

- I. Assessments are authentic, rigorous and student-centered.
  - Assessment tasks require clear, effective communication.
  - Students' abilities to self-assess are supported.
  - Assessments are appropriately challenging.
  - Assessments provide reliable evidence of progress toward targeted goals.
- II. Assessment is transparent and shared.
  - Students are aware of and understand assessment criteria prior to summative evaluations.
  - Assessments promote discourse between students and teachers.
  - Assessment practices clarify communication between teachers and parents.
- III. Assessments provide meaningful, useful feedback to support learner progress.
  - Assessments support students while they are learning.
  - Student outcomes evidenced in assessments are aligned to MYP objectives and Virginia Standards of Learning.
- IV. Assessments are used to inform, enhance and improve the teaching process.
  - Teachers are able to use assessment in-the-moment to drive instructional decisions.
  - Assessment data promotes collaboration between teachers when planning for instruction.
- V. Assessments enable all students to become stronger, more self-regulated learners.
  - Instruction in Approaches to Learning skills builds students' abilities to use assessment results to inform their next steps toward improving outcomes.

## **Assessment Practices: How do we assess?**

**Formative assessments** provide teachers with opportunities to gather, analyze, interpret and use multiple forms of evidence to improve student learning. These assessments are used as tools *for learning*. Teachers use the information from these assessments to adjust their instructional strategies and to provide specific feedback to promote students' progress toward mastery of targeted understandings, knowledge and skills. Formative assessments can also be used by students for peer-and/or self-assessment. Involving students in the assessment process increases their awareness of the MYP objectives and assessment criteria. When students are aware of expectations they are able to take ownership of their learning. As they practice how to give, receive and use meaningful feedback, they develop the ability to reflect and set goals so they are able to move to the next level of achievement.

Results of formative assessments may be reported through Synergy to inform parents and students, but are not included in the calculation of a student's final grade. Formative assessments are part of the learning process and in that way are considered practice. A useful analogy may be that formative assessments are like a scrimmage when summative assessments are the actual game where final scores count.

**Summative assessment** is part of every MYP unit. These assessments are evaluative and designed to provide evidence of student progress using MYP subject-group assessment criteria. Students’ current levels of achievement related to these specific targeted objectives reflect their abilities to use the knowledge, understandings and skills they were taught which encompass facts, concepts, procedures and metacognition (self-awareness and self-management).

**Success Criteria** clearly identify achievement levels for each objective on all formative and summative assessments. Their use with formative assessments helps students answer three basic questions: What are my learning goals? Where am I now? What do I need to do to close the gap between where I am now and where I need to go? Success criteria are shared with students and families in advance and serve to clarify objectives for learning. Teachers use these criteria to assess student progress and to collaborate in subject-group vertical teams to standardize their use. These criteria have the greatest impact on achievement when students are able to reflect on their progress and develop their own personal strategies to become more effective learners. The “just-in-time” feedback provided students on formative assessments is the most critical assessment practice available to Lakewood students, teachers, and families.

*After reviewing 7,827 studies on learning and instruction, researcher John Hattie . . . reported that providing students with specific information about their standing in terms of particular objectives increased their achievement by 37 percentile points (Wormeli. 2006, p. 28).*

**Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills** provide valuable support in developing the learning attributes students can use throughout their lives. ATL skills help students “learn how to learn”. Lakewood teachers embed instruction related to these skills within every unit they teach, working with colleagues to identify which specific skills in their subject group are critical to student success. Strategies for developing these skills are shared with students and feedback on their progress is communicated formally and informally. Growth in ATL skills strengthens the very behaviors which contribute to student achievement. Like formative assessments, the development of ATL skills is reported to students and families, but they do not contribute to the calculation of final grades reflecting mastery.

**Approaches to Learning (ATL) Skill categories:**

<b>Communication</b>		
<i>Exchanging thoughts, messages and information effectively through interaction</i>	<i>Reading, writing and using language to gather and communicate information</i>	
<b>Social</b>		
<i>Collaboration - Working effectively with others</i>		
<b>Self-Management</b>		
<i>Organization - Managing time and task effectively</i>	<i>Affective - Managing state of mind</i>	<i>Reflection - (Re)considering the process of learning; choosing and using ATL skills</i>
<b>Research</b>		
<i>Information Literacy - Finding, interpreting, judging and creating information</i>	<i>Media Literacy - Interacting with media to use and create ideas and information</i>	
<b>Thinking</b>		
<i>Critical Thinking - Analyzing and evaluating issues and ideas</i>	<i>Creative Thinking - Generating novel ideas and considering new perspectives</i>	<i>Transfer - Using skills and knowledge in multiple contexts</i>

**Other assessments** are unique from course to course, yet important in understanding the progress learners are achieving. Some subject-groups will use this category to communicate internal benchmark assessment results. As with NPS Benchmarks, these assessments are formative and are not included in computing a student’s final grade.

## Assessment Results: How is assessment information reported?

Effective use of assessment results requires the collaborative efforts of teachers, students and families. To that end it is imperative that all parties understand what every assessment communicates regarding student progress. MYP assessment criteria will be used by Lakewood teachers to report student progress towards the related objectives prescribed for each subject-group (see chart on next page). These criteria assess *the factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive dimensions of knowledge* taught within each subject (“MYP: From principles into practice,” 2014). Students will receive direct instruction in the use and interpretation of rubrics used to assess their work. The rubrics for each subject-group at all grade levels will be shared with families in meetings and through ParentVue in Synergy. An example of the MYP Sciences assessment criteria for Criterion A for Year 1 (grade 6) is included below with explanations.

Criterion A: Knowing and understanding	
Maximum: 8 At the end of year 1, students should be able to:	
I. outline scientific knowledge II. apply scientific knowledge and understanding to solve problems set in familiar situations and suggest solutions to problems set in unfamiliar situations III. Interpret information to make scientifically supported judgments.	
Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student <b>does not</b> reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1-2	The student is able to: I. <b>select</b> scientific knowledge II. <b>select</b> scientific knowledge and understanding to <b>suggest solutions</b> to problems set in <b>familiar situations</b> III. <b>apply</b> information to <b>make judgments</b> , with limited success.
3-4	The student is able to: I. <b>recall</b> scientific knowledge II. <b>apply</b> scientific knowledge and understanding to <b>suggest solutions</b> to problems set in <b>familiar situations</b> III. <b>apply</b> information to <b>make judgments</b> .
5-6	The student is able to: I. <b>state</b> scientific knowledge II. <b>apply</b> scientific knowledge and understanding to <b>solve problems</b> set in <b>familiar situations</b> III. <b>apply</b> information to <b>make scientifically supported judgments</b> .
7-8	The student is able to: I. <b>outline</b> scientific knowledge II. <b>apply</b> scientific knowledge and understanding to <b>solve problems</b> set in <b>familiar situations</b> and <b>suggest solutions</b> to problems set in <b>unfamiliar situations</b> III. <b>interpret</b> information to <b>make scientifically supported judgments</b> .

The 3 strands (i, ii, iii) identified for Sciences Criterion A are the intended goals for a student’s ability to provide evidence of their knowledge and understanding of course concepts and content. Full attainment of these objectives results in a score of 7 or 8.

All criteria have four bands and a maximum of eight achievement levels.

The bold print distinguishes the differences in the performance level for each band. These terms clarify for students what they need to demonstrate to move from one achievement level to the next. Students will be taught how to interpret these terms.

**Criterion scores are not averaged. 4 out of 8 does NOT represent a percentage score of 50%. The level descriptors are a better guide to identifying what a student knows and understands.**

<b>Academy for Discovery at Lakewood MYP Assessment Criteria Across Subjects</b>						
<b>Course</b>	<b>Criterion A Summative 25%</b>	<b>Criterion B Summative 25%</b>	<b>Criterion C Summative 25%</b>	<b>Criterion D Summative 25%</b>	<b>ATLs 0%</b>	<b>Other 0%</b>
<i>Languages and Literature</i>	Analyzing	Organizing	Producing Text	Using Language	Please Refer to the Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills section on page 3	Please Refer to the "Other" section on page 4
<i>Language Acquisition</i>	Comprehending Spoken and Visual Text	Comprehending Written and Visual Text	Communicating	Using Language		
<i>Individuals and Societies</i>	Knowing and Understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking Critically		
<i>Sciences</i>	Knowing and Understanding	Inquiring and Design	Processing and Evaluation	Reflecting on the Impacts of Science		
<i>Mathematics</i>	Knowing and Understanding	Investigating Patterns	Communicating	Applying Mathematics in Real-World Contexts		
<i>Arts</i>	Knowing and Understanding	Developing Skills	Thinking Creatively	Responding		
<i>Physical and Health Education</i>	Knowing and Understanding	Planning for Performance	Applying Performing	Reflecting and Improving Performance		
<i>Design</i>	Inquiring and Analysis	Developing Ideas	Creating the Solution	Evaluating		

### How are students' grades determined?

It is important to remember that summative assessments are used for evaluation and therefore determine a student's grade. Alternatively, formative assessments are not used to calculate students' final grades even though they may be reported in Synergy to inform parents of progress. Students' achievement levels for all summative assessments are **NOT** averaged. Instead, the most consistent current scores represent a more accurate gauge of a student's progress.

In the sample below two students' scores for Criterion A are reported sequentially. The shaded scores are formative and have no weight (0.0 pts.) The other five scores are summative and are used to determine a final score for this criterion. If Alex's scores were averaged he would earn a final score of 3, but his progress is more accurately represented by a score of 4. His earlier scores do not represent where he is currently in regard to mastery of the related objectives. Tim would also earn a 4, but may be on his way to earning a 5 if subsequent scores of 5 provide that evidence.

Student	Criterion A Formative Max. 8.0 Classwork	Criterion A Summative Max. 8.0 Essay	Criterion A Summative Max. 8.0 Project	Criterion A Formative Max. 8.0 Exit Slip	Criterion A Summative Max. 8.0 Unit Test	Criterion A Summative Max. 8.0 Project	Criterion A Summative Max. 8.0 DBQ	Final Score Crit. A
Alex	1	3	3	5	4	4	4	4
Tim	2	2	3	4	4	5	4	4

Scores earned in all four summative criteria (A, B, C, D) are weighted equally (25% each). A student's final grade is based on the sum of the scores earned in each criteria.

For example, Alex earned a 4 in Criterion A, a 5 in Criterion B and a 6 in Criteria C and D. His total score is 21 which results in a B+ for this grading period. With time left in the school year, Alex has time to improve all of his scores and can still earn a higher final grade. His consistent, current achievement level will represent his grade and the mastery level he achieved.

**The chart on the next page shows how criteria totals are translated to a letter grade. Even though letter grades communicate in familiar ways, the descriptor column in this chart provides a clearer explanation of a students' actual achievement and how improvement gains could be achieved in the future.**

**Numerical scores representing achievement are also used in advanced placement courses and in the IB Diploma program. The MYP assessment criteria support that practice by acclimating students to the use of 8-point assessment rubrics to promote student growth in both formative and summative settings.**

## General Grade Descriptors and Grade Equivalencies

Grade	Boundary guidelines	GPA	Descriptor
A	28-32	4.0	Produces high-quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations.
A-	24-27	3.7	Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence.
B+	21-23	3.3	Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations and, with support, some unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence.
B	19-20	3.0	
B-	16-18	2.7	Produces good quality-work. Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations.
C+	14-15	2.3	Produces work of acceptable quality. Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally significant misunderstandings or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking. Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.
C	12-13	2.0	
C-	10-11	1.7	
D+	8-9	1.3	Produces work of limited quality. Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills.
D	6-7	1.0	
E	1-5	0.0	Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.

## **Individual Student Progress: How is evidence of progress shared with families?**

Progress reports communicate scores and current grades. Opportunities to discuss progress with individual families will be provided in two ways: parent conferences and student-led conferences. Parent Conferences take place twice each month after school. These conferences are initiated by parents and are scheduled through school counselors. All of a student's teachers attend these conferences to discuss student progress and answer parent questions.

Student-led conferences will be introduced to Lakewood in grade six during the 2016-17 school year. *Student-led conferences are part of a system of student-engaged assessment that involves students in analyzing and investing in their own growth, changing the primary role of assessment from evaluating and ranking students to motivating and equipping them to learn* (Berger, Ron. 2014). Lakewood students will be supported in reflecting upon their strengths and weaknesses and in assembling portfolio evidence to clearly communicate that reflection. Additionally, students will collaborate with a teacher and peers to practice leading a conference with their parent or other student-selected adult. Feedback from parents and students regarding the usefulness of these conferences and possible suggestions on how they might be improved in subsequent school years will be sought in the spring of 2016.

## **Communication of Policy**

The completed Assessment Policy will be shared with the entire faculty in a formal meeting and will remain on the school's shared drive for staff to access as needed. Parent meetings introducing the policy for grade 6 took place in the spring of 2016. Evening parent meetings will be held for grade 7 and 8 families during the first week in September of 2016. In subsequent years, families of incoming grade 6 students will be introduced to the MYP assessment practices during evening commitment presentations. Additionally, copies of the policy will be available upon request from Lakewood's media specialist and will be posted on the school's website.

Lakewood staff also realizes that the proposed changes to the reporting of student progress will require a great deal of support to students and their families. To that end, parent information sessions will be held prior to and after the first distribution of progress reports each fall. A tutorial video explaining the use of ParentVue in Synergy and how to interpret scores students receive will be launched in October of 2016 on the school's website.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What if a student fails to turn in an assignment?**

Traditionally, tasks which are not completed are recorded as a zero and averaged into a student's final grade whether or not the tasks were formative (practice) or summative. Within Lakewood's MYP grading practices zeroes will remain as blanks in Synergy. Failure to complete assignments is a behavior and represents no evidence of progress towards mastery. If a student frequently fails to complete assignments, that is represented in the Approaches to Learning category in Synergy as a reflection of the student's ability to self-manage. Failure to complete assignments will naturally impact a student's progress as the tasks themselves provide practice. Additionally, students lose an opportunity to receive valuable feedback on their progress when they fail to complete an assignment. Without a sufficient pattern of evidence to interpret a student's progress a failing grade may result. Efforts will be made to seek family support to prevent such outcomes.

**When is the work a student submits for grading not considered as evidence of progress?**

The simplest way to answer this is: when the work varies greatly from the student's own usual effort. This is not always easy for a teacher to determine and at other times it is clear. Plagiarism is usually clear. Cheating is often clear. Work which is significantly stronger than any past evidence received from a student is not as clear, but will raise a red flag for a teacher. In those cases, teachers will share their concern with the student and may not record a score for that work. Tasks completed in class represent the clearest examples of student progress. Students are not given a zero when any of the above examples occur. Instead, they receive no grade for that task as there is no credible evidence representing their effort. Lakewood staff is committed to helping students understand the impact of all forms of academic dishonesty. Students who plagiarize or cheat will receive consequences, but not in their academic achievement grade. Lakewood's Academic Honesty Policy, available on the school website, serves to clarify our school's philosophy and practices regarding academic honesty.

**What happens when a student's grades are high because they are interested in the content and later they do poorly because they find the content uninteresting? Will that not impact progress shown and therefore a grade?**

It is true that a student's own motivation can influence success in the classroom. Quite often students do better in some units because they have some prior experience or background knowledge of the content to support their learning. Those earlier experiences often serve to ignite interest or attention and thus support performance. But we all know what it's like to be confronted with learning something we know nothing about and have little interest in exploring. A student may be totally intrigued by a unit on astronomy and deeply bored with the study of rocks and minerals. These experiences also occur in different disciplines also. "I'm not good at math," a student may believe and through that reasoning poor performance is reflected in grades earned. Every student faces these experiences. The difference in their performance is determined by how they approach the task of learning something when they are not interested in doing so. Lakewood's new policy for assessment will help to arm all students with the ability to muscle through those units or courses when their personal interest is simply not enough to do so. This support is especially needed now, when our children's brains are often over-stimulated with new technologies. So the most honest answer to the question, is yes, it will impact their progress. Hopefully that impact will be short-lived and they will bounce back because they learned how to examine why this happened and how to fix it. Learning these lessons now, when there is a system in place that will not penalize them for the dip in their performance, will provide them with the skills needed later in high school and beyond to manage those times when they are tasked with learning something they have no interest in learning. And they will face those times.

NOTE: This section will be further populated by questions parents ask during our meetings to introduce them to the policy and its implementation.

## **Policy Development**

1. Frequent discussions by all MYP staff members occurred in the spring of 2016, with participants in IB Category I and II training helping to clarify the intent of MYP assessment practices for all staff members.
2. Support for proceeding with MYP assessment was garnered from members of Norfolk Public Schools' central administration in June. Concerns shared in these meetings addressed how MYP grade reporting would blend with the district's grade reporting platform, Synergy.
3. One Mathematics teacher, one Individuals & Societies teacher and the MYP Coordinator developed the policy's first draft in late July.
4. Feedback on draft one was secured from Lakewood's administration and IB consultant.
5. A second draft reflecting feedback received was shared with Lakewood's Leadership Team and members of the policy steering committee in August of 2016.
6. A final draft representing the collaborative efforts of the Steering Committee was accepted by Lakewood's entire staff during pre-service in August of 2016 for implementation in the 2016-17 school year. It is available on the school's website.

## **Policy Review**

The first year's use of the assessment practices will help Lakewood strengthen the foundations for assessment in subsequent years. This policy represents deep changes in assessment practices and will result in "growing pains" as all stakeholders adjust to these changes. Feedback from teachers, students and families will be sought at the end of the 2016-17 school year and will be considered by Lakewood's staff and assessment steering committee to make any needed changes in assessment practices. This process will be continued annually.

## **Resources**

Berger, Ron. March, 2014. *When Students Lead Their Learning*, [Educational Leadership](#) (online).

International Baccalaureate Organization (2016). *Learner Profile Booklet*

International Baccalaureate Organization (2014). *MYP: From principles into practice*

International Baccalaureate Organization (2014). *Programme standards and practices*

International Baccalaureate Organization (2014). *Sciences Guide*

Leshar Middle School, <https://les.psdschools.org/ibmyp>

Mid-Atlantic Association of IB World Schools. *Assessment Policies*.

[http://www.ibmidatlantic.org/Assessment\\_Policies.pdf](http://www.ibmidatlantic.org/Assessment_Policies.pdf)

Moss, Connie M. and Susan M. Brookhart. 2012. *Learning Targets: Helping Students Aim for Understanding in Today's Lesson*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Norfolk Public Schools. 2016. *Grading Procedures: Handbook for Teachers*. Norfolk, VA.

Stiggins, Rick. 2014. *7 Principles of Student Centered Classroom Assessment*,

<http://www.rickstiggins.com/2014/03/04/7-principles-of-student-centered-classroom-assessment/>

Wormeli, Rick. 2006. *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.